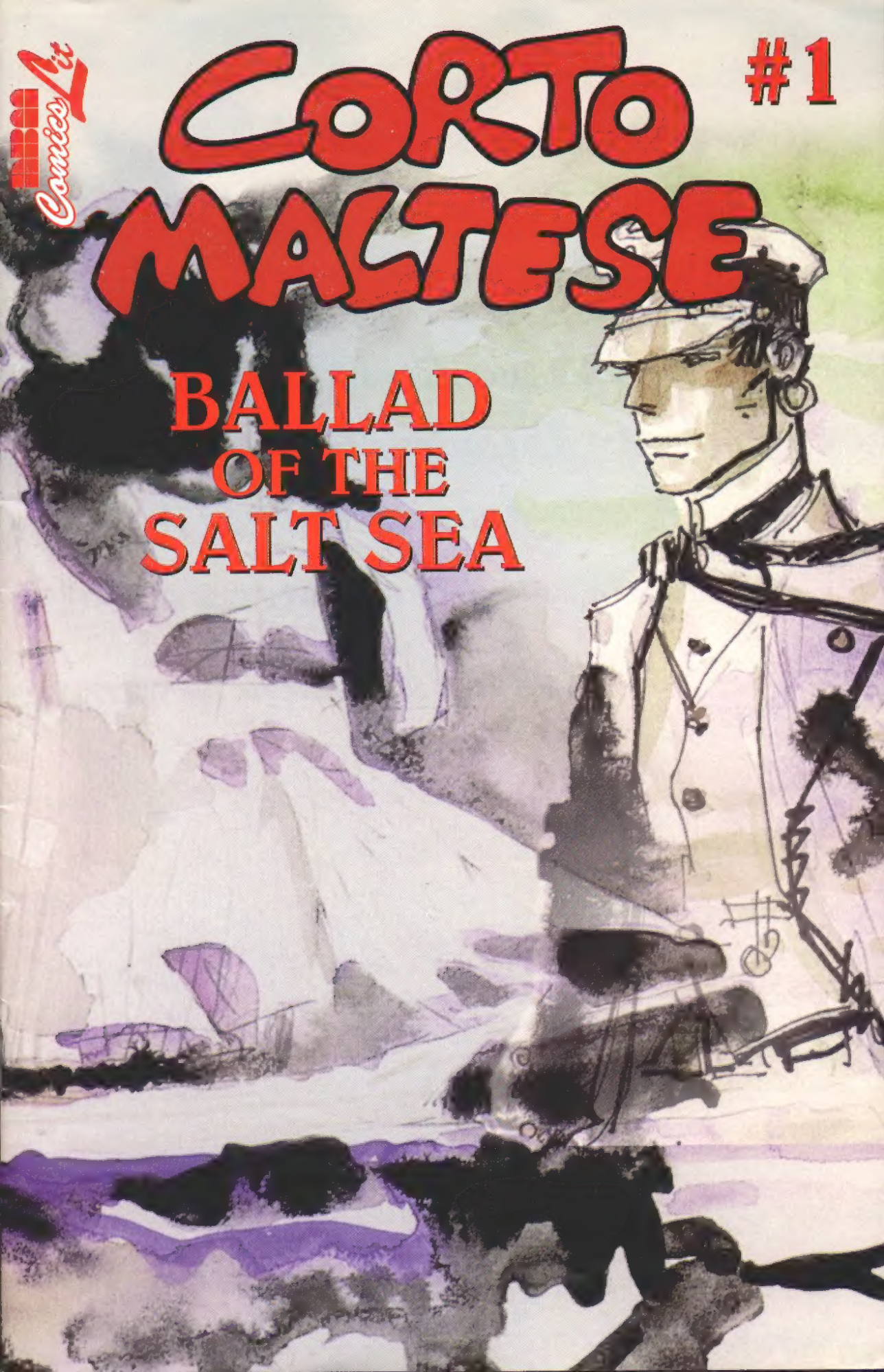
Comics Lit
CORTO MALTESE
#1
BALLAD OF THE SALT SEA

Welcome to Adventure!

Welcome to the intriguing and captivating world of one of Europe's most successful series: Corto Maltese. This saga, as yet unseen in the U.S. and of which you hold the first chapter, was the first to present the characters that would eventually make Hugo Pratt one of the all-time giants of comic art.

This story first came out more than 25 years ago and has become a benchmark in comic art history. Marrying, at the time in a revolutionary way, the thrill of adventure and the intelligence of a true novel, it and the ensuing series made Pratt one of the stars of a new sort of comics. One that bowed its head to no other media. One that proudly stood up as an art form.

In the heady seventies in France when comics suddenly became "cool" and widely accepted and when comics were experimenting in all directions, Corto Maltese became recognized as a leader in intelligent, fun comic art.

Nowhere could I witness better the sheer legendary status Pratt attained thanks to this strip than seeing at a book fair the stand for Rizzoli, one of Italy's biggest and most respected publishers, with two huge backlit photos of their star authors: Hugo Pratt and Umberto Eco (who was, in fact, a fan). We still dream of such things here.

This comic book also represents a bit of an adventure for *us* in that, in twenty years of existence, we've never gone into comic book publishing. I thought this would be a way to introduce to you some fun stuff and see how you like it before asking you to commit to a graphic novel.

Enjoy! Write me your comments: NBM, 185 Madison Ave., Ste. 1504, New York, NY 10016.

Terry Nantier

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Translation by Ian Monk
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CORTO MALTESE

CORTO MALTESE
Pratt

Corto Maltese, adventurer, sailor, world traveller, witness and participant in a time of sweeping change: the first thirty years of this century. One of the world's best known and best loved series.

Each a separate story, 8½x 11, color covers:
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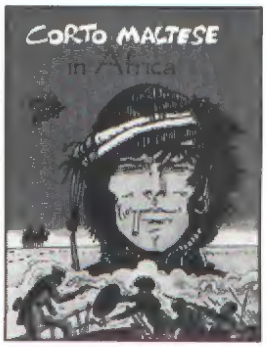

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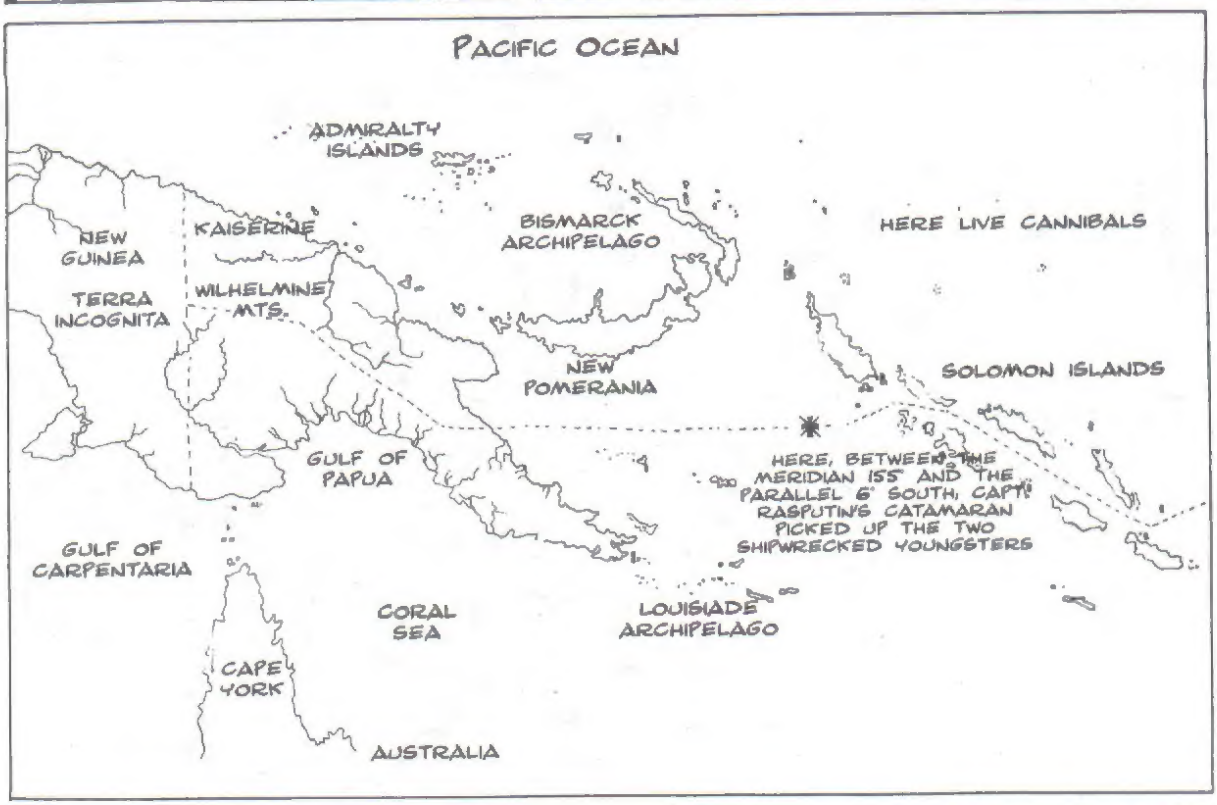
I AM THE PACIFIC OCEAN AND I AM THE LARGEST. THIS HAS BEEN MY NAME FOR A LONG TIME NOW, BUT IT IS NOT ALWAYS TRUE THAT I AM PACIFIC. I GET ANGRY SOMETIMES, THEN EVERYONE IS IN FOR A GOOD THRASHING. AS FOR TODAY, I'VE JUST CALMED DOWN. BUT YESTERDAY I MUST HAVE SWEPT EVERYTHING AWAY OFF THREE OR FOUR ISLANDS, PLUS THE SAME NUMBER OF THOSE COCONUT SHELLS THAT MEN CALL BOATS... AS FOR THIS ONE...
WHAT'S HAPPENING?
HIRDWAY! THERE'S A BOAT
PETE ATEATEA! WHITE MEN!
...YES, THE ONE YOU CAN SEE HERE. I WONDER HOW IT MANAGED TO ESCAPE. MAYBE BECAUSE CAPTAIN RASPUTIN KNOWS HIS JOB AND HIS SAILORS COME FROM THE FIJI ISLANDS. OR MAYBE BECAUSE THEY'VE MADE A PACT WITH THE DEVIL. IT DOESN'T MATTER EITHER WAY. TODAY IS "TAROWEAN", THE DAY OF SURPRISES, ALL SAINTS' DAY, THE 1ST OF NOVEMBER, 1913.
EVARUA-T-EATUA. TWO SHIPWRECK SURVIVORS.
DEAD?
AINE... TWO YOUNGSTERS ...A WOMAN, THE OTHER'S A MAN.
THEY'RE NOT DEAD... THEY'RE ASLEEP.
CALL THE CAPTAIN.
UGH!
CAPTAIN, WE'VE PICKED UP TWO PEOPLE FROM A SHIPWRECK.

L.A. DE BOUG
VOYAGE
AUTOU
DU MON
DE LA FRÉGATE
WHAT?
WHO TOLD YOU TO STOP? GET OUT OF HERE, YOU FOOL!
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE? WHO'S THIS...
THEY YOUNG WHITES, CAPTAIN, THEY ILL...
THEIR LIFEBOAT'S CALLED "THE LASS OF AMSTERDAM". THEIR BOAT MUST HAVE HAD THE SAME NAME.
HMMM! "THE LASS OF AMSTERDAM"? I KNOW HER. SHE'S A BEAUTIFUL LUXURY SCHOONER...
WHATEVER AM I GOING TO DO WITH THESE TWO?
WE SHOULD KEEP THEM WITH US.
IF THEIR PARENTS ARE RICH, THEY'LL PAY DEARLY TO GET THEM BACK. DON'T YOU THINK SO, CAPTAIN?
YES, MAYBE YOU'RE RIGHT. VERY WELL. PUT THEM INSIDE AND TAKE CARE OF THEM.

VON SPEEKE MUSTN'T SEE THEM WHEN WE MEET...
HE'D TAKE THEM UNDER HIS PROTECTION. THEN WE CAN KISS THE RANSOM GOODBYE!
ONWARDS! LET'S KEEP GOING ON THE SAME TACK TOWARDS KAISERINE!


PACIFIC OCEAN
ADMIRALTY ISLANDS
NEW GUINEA
KAISERINE
BISMARCK ARCHIPELAGO
HERE LIVE CANNIBALS
TERRA INCOGNITA
WILHELMINE MTS.
NEW POMERANIA
SOLOMON ISLANDS
GULF OF PAPUA
HERE, BETWEEN THE MERIDIAN 155° AND THE PARALLEL 6° SOUTH, CAPT. RASPUTIN'S CATAMARAN PICKED UP THE TWO SHIPWRECKED YOUNGSTERS
GULF OF CARPENTARIA
CORAL SEA
LOUISIADE ARCHIPELAGO
CAPE YORK
AUSTRALIA

THE CATAMARAN CONTINUES ITS LONG VOYAGE TOWARDS A PLACE WITH A GERMAN NAME: KAISERINE.

INSIDE THE CATAMARAN...
BUT WHERE...? CAIN... CAIN...

CAIN! WHERE AM I...?
NOW I REMEMBER... THERE WAS A FIRE... WE WERE SHIPWRECKED... BUT CAIN WAS WITH ME... WHATEVER CAN HAVE HAPPENED TO HIM?
I'M ABOARD A CATAMARAN... AND THE NATIVES LOOK LIKE SOLDIERS.
WHAT?!!
SOCK!
HOW DARE YOU, YOU PIG! I'LL... I'LL...
WHAT A WILD CAT! YOU'VE CRACKED MY HEAD OPEN...
STAY AWAY FROM ME!
SO THAT'S ALL THE THANKS I GET...
... FOR SAVING YOUR LIFE...?
AND CAIN... IS HE ALL RIGHT?
CAIN? OH, YOU MEAN THE BOY... YES, HE'S FINE.
PAMPAREMBA... PAMPAREMBA!

CAPTAIN RASPUTIN, COME QUICKLY... PAMPAREMBA!
THEY'RE CALLING ME... NOW, TAKE THAT! IT'LL TEACH YOU WHO'S IN CHARGE AROUND HERE.
SOCK!
TATA PE... LOOK THROUGH THE LONG EYE... THERE'S A MAN OVER THERE!
A MAN?
LET'S SEE. HMMM... YES, BUT HE HASN'T BEEN SHIPWRECKED... I BET I KNOW WHO IT IS!
NO DOUBT ABOUT IT. IT'S CORTO MALTESE. WHATEVER CAN HAVE HAPPENED TO HIS BOAT?
MUTINY, CAPTAIN!
THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO GET RID OF HIM FOR GOOD. WHAT DO YOU THINK, CAPTAIN? BUT THE "MONK" WOULDN'T AGREE... PITY...
YOUR TONGUE WAGS TOO MUCH, CRANIO. ONE OF THESE DAYS I'LL GET ROUND TO SHUTTING YOUR MOUTH FOR GOOD!
EHILA! CORTO! HOW ARE THINGS? HAVING A NICE SUNBATHE?
DAMN FOOL! JUST MY LUCK TO COME ACROSS YOU.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN TIED UP LIKE THAT?
SINCE LAST NIGHT.
LISTEN, SET ME FREE FIRST. THEN WE CAN TALK...
I WAS THINKING THAT, IN FACT, I DON'T LIKE YOU VERY MUCH.
I COULD EASILY LEAVE YOU WHERE YOU ARE...
THE "MONK" WOULD NEVER FORGIVE YOU...
THE "MONK", THE "MONK", ALWAYS THE "MONK"! IF SO MUCH WASN'T AT STAKE, I'D SEND YOU TO HELL, THE LOT OF YOU!
BUT CAPTAIN RASPUTIN'S NO FOOL. HEY! YOU OVER THERE! HAUL HIM UP!
GOOD FOR YOU, RASPUTIN. I'LL REMEMBER THIS SOME DAY...
HOW DID YOU LOSE YOUR BOAT? WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO NOW?
GIVE ME SOMETHING TO DRINK!
LISTEN CAREFULLY, CORTO, YOU ARE ABOARD MY BOAT, AND I'M THE ONE WHO'S IN CHARGE. LET'S GO BELOW DECK AND YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT HAPPENED...
SO? YOU DON'T WANT TO TELL ME, DO YOU? THE "MONK" WON'T BE VERY PLEASED WHEN HE LEARNS THAT YOU MANAGED TO LOSE YOUR BOAT! WHY DID THEY MUTINY?
MY BOATSWAIN WAS THE BROTHER OF A YOUNG GIRL I PROMISED TO MARRY A LONG TIME AGO. AND THAT WAS THEIR EXCUSE. THEY MADE OFF WITH MY WEAPONS SO THAT THEY COULD START PIRATING. WHAT'S SO SURPRISING ABOUT THAT? THEY LEARNT THEIR LESSON FROM YOU!

ALL RIGHT... WE'LL TRY TO SORT THINGS OUT.
ANY NEWS OF VON SPEEKE?
NO? THEN WE'LL TRY TO GET THERE IN TIME TO GIVE HIM SOME GOOD NEWS.
THE DUTCH SHIP IS LOADED WITH COAL...
OH YES!
THEY'LL PAY US RICHLY FOR IT! GERMANY NEEDS COAL. ESPECIALLY NOW HER BASES MIGHT BE OCCUPIED BY THE ALLIES.
THERE'LL BE A RACE FOR IT.
WHEN THIS WAR IS OVER...
... WHICH EVER SIDE WINS, WE'LL BE RICH!
THAT IS, IF THE "MONK" AGREES!
AND WHY SHOULDN'T HE?
DON'T FORGET THAT WE'LL HAVE SO MUCH GOLD THAT WE'LL BE ABLE TO LIVE A LIFE OF LUXURY FOR THE REST OF OUR DAYS, EVEN IF WE DO HAVE TO SPLIT IT TEN WAYS INSTEAD OF THREE. AND THEN WE HAVE BRAINS, DON'T WE...?
WE'LL SOON RUN INTO THE DUTCH SHIP
WHO'S THIS? WHAT'S SHE DOING HERE?
I'M PANDORA GROOVESNORE, SIR...

PANDORA GROOVESNORE? WELL, WELL, WELL! THE DAUGHTER OF THADEUS, THE BIG SHIP OWNER FROM SYDNEY... WHO GAVE YOU THAT BLACK EYE?
YOUR FRIEND, THE CAPTAIN!
FRIEND? THAT'S SAYING A LOT, DON'T YOU THINK SO, RAS?
THE CAPTAIN AND I ARE NOT REALLY FRIENDS. WE JUST HAVE CERTAIN THINGS IN COMMON.
I PICKED HER UP WITH A BOY WHO HASN'T COME ROUND YET. THEY'D BEEN CUT ADRIFT BY THE HURRICANE.
HEY, CAPTAIN RASPUTIN! BIG SHIP!!
UGH!
MAYBE IT'S THE SHIP WE'VE BEEN WAITING FOR!
IT'S BOUND TO BE. WE'RE A LITTLE AHEAD OF SCHEDULE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK, RAS? IS IT HER?
DEFINITELY. I INTERCEPTED A RADIO MESSAGE SHE SENT TO SUWA THE DAY BEFORE YESTERDAY. SHE WAS GIVING HER COURSE.
CORTO, GET THE MEN READY TO BOARD HER.
VERY GOOD, RAS!
THEY'LL THINK WE ARE A BRITISH PATROL BOAT AND LET US COME ON BOARD... WHEN THE SHIP'S IN OUR HANDS, WE'LL DECIDE WHAT TO DO WITH THE CREW.
CAPTAIN RASPUTIN... ISN'T THE SEA BEAUTIFUL?
THE DUTCH SHIP NEARS CAPTAIN RASPUTIN'S CATAMARAN.

IT'S A CATAMARAN FROM THE FIJI ISLANDS, SIR!
THE FIJI ISLANDS? THAT'S A LONG WAY OFF!
PERHAPS IT'S BECAUSE OF THE HURRICANE?
LET'S APPROACH THEM. MAYBE THEY NEED HELP.
TURJO, YOU'RE FROM FIJI AREN'T YOU? WHAT IS THAT BOAT DOING HERE?
THAT'S ODD! IT'S NOT ON THE ROUTE OUR BOATS TAKE. WE ALWAYS GO EITHER EAST OR SOUTH..
BUT WE NEVER GO OUT SO FAR TO THE WEST... I DON'T UNDERSTAND IT!
THEY'RE RUNNING UP A FLAG...
A FLAG? SINCE WHEN HAVE SAVAGES STARTED FOLLOWING MARITIME LAW?
A BRITISH ENSIGN?!!
THERE'S A WHITE OFFICER, WITH NATIVE SEAMEN.
A BRITISH PATROL ABOARD A CATAMARAN FROM FIJI? THE ADMIRALTY SHOULDN'T BE SO MEAN... THEY SHOULD BUY THEM A GUNBOAT. LET'S INVITE THEM ABOARD.
I DON'T KNOW.. I HAVE A BAD FEELING ABOUT THIS. I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK OF THAT BOAT.

THANK YOU, CAPTAIN.
COME ON, VAN HERDERN, DON'T BE SO SUPERSTITIOUS... GOOD DAY, COMMANDER! WOULD YOU CARE TO STEP ON BOARD?
I AM CAPTAIN RASPUTIN, COMMISSIONED BY THE ROYAL MARINE. I'M TAKING COMMAND OF YOUR SHIP.
EXCUSE ME? I'M SORRY, I DON'T UNDERSTAND...
YOU'RE CARRYING A CARGO OF COAL. MY GOVERNMENT IS SEIZING IT, AS WELL AS YOUR SHIP AND EVERYTHING IN IT.
BUT, YOU MUST BE MAD! WAR HASN'T BEEN DECLARED... YOU HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO RIGHT...
AND YOU HAVE A BRITISH UNIFORM AND ENSIGN.. WHICH MEANS THIS IS AN ACT OF PIRACY!
THAT'S IT! YOU'RE PIRATES!
I SHALL NOT REST UNTIL I HAVE...
BANG!
DOES ANYONE ELSE WANT TO FOLLOW THE CAPTAIN?
YOU'VE KILLED HIM, YOU SWINE...!
BETTER DO AS HE SAYS, VAN HERDERN.
HUGO PRATT
WHAT'S GOING ON? I HEARD A SHOT!
MAY YOU BURN IN HELL, RASPUTIN! DID YOU REALLY HAVE TO KILL HIM?
DON'T FORGET... I'M IN CHARGE AROUND HERE!

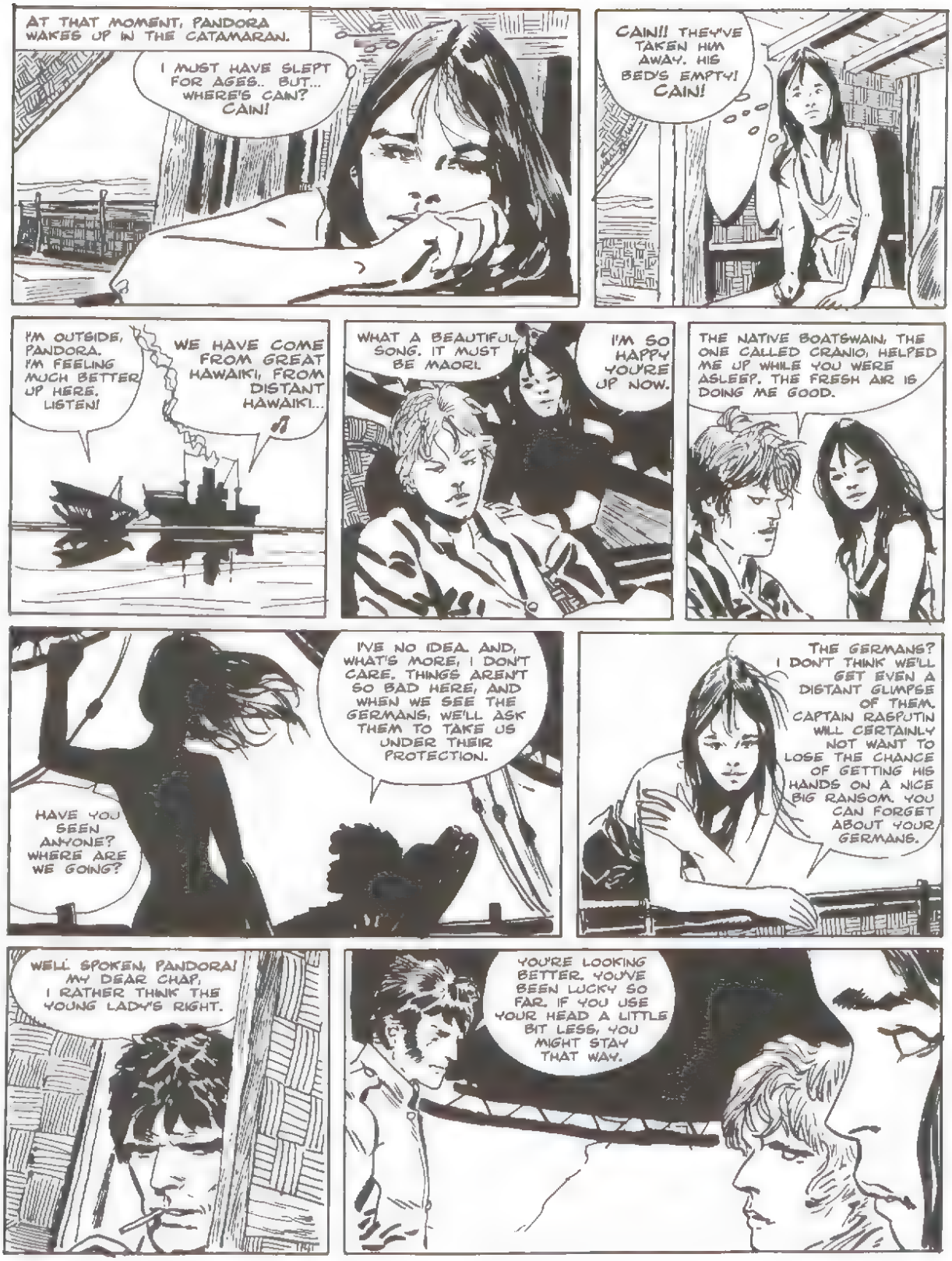
STILL THE SAME OLD BUTCHER! WE'VE TAKEN THE SHIP, YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO KILL THE CAPTAIN!
I DON'T FEEL LIKE DISCUSSING THE MATTER. I CAN DO WHATEVER I LIKE!
ALL RIGHT THEN. YOU REPEAT YOURSELF A BIT TOO MUCH, RASPUTIN. WE'LL SEE WHAT THE "MONK" HAS TO SAY WHEN WE GET BACK TO THE ISLAND.
THAT'S MY BUSINESS, AND WHAT I TELL HIM DOESN'T CONCERN YOU! IN THE MEANTIME, KEEP WELL OUT OF MY WAY, OR YOU'LL BE SORRY..
TAKE THE CREW TO THE STERN. WE'LL SET THEM ADRIFT WITH WATER, FOOD AND A SAIL... IF THEY'RE LUCKY THEY'LL MANAGE TO FIND AN ISLAND.
FORWARD, WHITE MEN! GET INTO THE LIFEBOAT!
OKAY, WE'RE GOING! WE'LL BE IN MALAITA IN A COUPLE OF DAYS.
THE SOONER WE'RE OFF THIS SHIP, THE BETTER! TOO BAD FOR THE CAPTAIN. COME ALONG, LADS!
CAST OFF!
WHERE'S THE FOOD? THERE'S NO WATER! WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?
YOU WON'T BE HUNGRY WHERE YOU'RE GOING! HAVE A GOOD TRIP TO HELL!!
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!
CRACK!

WHATEVER'S HAPPENING NOW? HE'S NOT, IS HE...?
RASPUTIN!
YOU'VE KILLED THEM ALL, YOU BASTARD! THIS TIME I'M GOING TO PACK YOU OFF TO JOIN THEM...
BUT WHY? DON'T YOU UNDERSTAND ANYTHING, CORTO? THERE'S FAR TOO MUCH AT STAKE.
THERE'S NO POINT ARGUING. I'M NOT GOING TO LET YOU GET AWAY WITH WHAT YOU'VE JUST DONE.
AKK!
SOCK!
HE'LL BE OUT FOR A LONG TIME, CAPTAIN RASPUTIN!
PUT HIM IN IRONS... WHEN HE WAKES UP WE'LL MAKE HIM STOKE THE BOILERS!
THE LIFEBOAT'S GOING DOWN, AND THE SHARKS ARE FEEDING... A SEA FEAST! A SEA FEAST! ALLELUIA!

DOUBLE THE SAILS! THAT'LL TAKE US FAR AWAY! SAIL OFF TOWARDS A DISTANT LAND, GO OFF WITH THE CURRENT AND THE WIND IN THE STERN...
SING A SONG OF FAREWELL TO MANGAREWA!
THAT'S ENOUGH, I'M TIRED.
SILENCE, PRETENDER!
AT THAT MOMENT, IN THE CATAMARAN, WHICH IS BEING TOWED BY THE SHIP...
WHERE'S THAT SINGING COMING FROM? WHERE AM I?
MY GOD! I CAN'T EVEN GET UP... I FEEL SO WEAK..
PANDORA!
WHAT... CAIN?!
WHERE ARE WE, PANDORA?
AT LAST! I THOUGHT YOU WERE NEVER GOING TO WAKE UP AGAIN...
I FEEL EXHAUSTED... BUT... WHERE ARE WE? WHAT HAPPENED?
WE'RE ABOARD A PIRATE SHIP, WHICH PICKED US UP AFTER THE GREAT STORM. THE CAPTAIN IS COMPLETELY RUTHLESS. HIS NAME'S RASPUTIN. YESTERDAY, HE CAPTURED A SHIP AND HE KILLED...
..THE ENTIRE CREW. THEY MEAN TO SELL THE CARGO TO SOMEONE CALLED VON SPEEKE.
VON SPEEKE? HE'S A GERMAN ADMIRAL! THIS IS ALL VERY ODD. BUT THE MAIN THING IS, WE'RE STILL ALIVE!
TAKEN FROM THE SEA DEEPS IN KANALOA: THE WHITE CORAL FROM THE SEA CAVERNS WAS FISHED UP BY A FISHERMAN...

ONE THING IS SURE. OUR PARENTS ARE SO RICH THAT THEY WON'T HARM A HAIR ON OUR HEADS. AS FAR AS THEY ARE CONCERNED, WE REPRESENT A STACK OF MONEY... TELL ME SOMETHING...
HAVE YOU COME ACROSS ANYONE WHO SEEMS TRUSTWORTHY? I MEAN, SOMEONE WHO MIGHT HELP US?
NO, CAIN, I HAVEN'T. THEY'RE A GANG OF CRIMINALS! RASPUTIN EVEN HIT ME. AND THE OTHER ONE, CORTO MALTESE, MUST BE JUST AS BAD. THEY ALSO MENTIONED A THIRD LEADER, THE "MONK"!
THE "MONK"?
I'VE HEARD UNCLE RINALD TALK ABOUT HIM. HE'S A STRANGE CHARACTER WHO REIGNS OVER EVERYTHING BETWEEN THE GILBERT ISLANDS AND THE LEEWARD ISLANDS.
THE SAILORS OF THREE COUNTRIES HAVEN'T MANAGED TO DISCOVER HIS ISLAND HIDEAWAY. VERY FEW PEOPLE HAVE SEEN HIM. UNCLE RINALD IS ONE OF THEM.
YES, NOW I CAN REMEMBER, WHEN I WAS YOUNG, UNCLE RINALD TELLING ME THE TALE OF THE MONK AND "ESCONDIDA", THE HIDDEN ISLAND.
GOOD HEAVENS! WHOSE HANDS HAVE WE FALLEN INTO? CAIN, WHAT'S GOING TO BECOME OF US?
I DON'T KNOW, PANDORA, BUT I'M NOT AFRAID!
COME WITH US TO LIVE ON GREEN-BACKED HAWAII, THE LAND THAT WAS SHAPED IN THE OCEAN AND DRAWN UP OUT OF THE SEA...
LOOK AT HAWAII, AN ISLAND AND A PEOPLE. THE HAWAIIANS ARE TAHITI'S CHILDREN.
THE ONES WHO ARE SINGING AREN'T FROM FIJI... WHERE ARE THEY FROM, CRANIO?
THEY'RE MAORI SAILORS! THEY WORK HERE MANNING THE SHIP AND STOKING THE BOILERS.
TALKING ABOUT THE BOILERS... GO AND GET CORTO MALTESE. I WANT A WORD WITH HIM. HE'LL HAVE CALMED DOWN BY NOW.
CAP'N RASPUTIN WANTS A WORD WITH YOU UP ON DECK. THE AIR'S NICE AND COOL UP THERE!
I'LL TAKE YOUR WORD FOR IT, TAR STAIN. I'M SURE EVEN HELL IS COOLER THAN THIS PLACE!

WHAT'S UP, RASPUTIN?
I FIGURED THAT THE HEAT OF THE BOILERS WOULD HAVE MADE YOU SWEAT OUT YOUR BAD TEMPER...
NOW, LET'S GET THINGS STRAIGHT. WE CAN'T AFFORD TO SLIP UP. LEAVING WITNESSES WOULD HAVE BEEN PURE MADNESS. THE "MONK" WILL CERTAINLY APPROVE OF WHAT I'VE DONE!
YES, I KNOW! BUT YOU'LL HAVE TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO BE ABLE TO TELL HIM... AND THAT I DOUBT!
ALL RIGHT, CORTO, JUST AS YOU LIKE..
... CARRY ON THINKING THE SAME WAY, BUT I DID CALL YOU UP!
AND I KNOW WHY YOU CALLED ME. WE'LL BE AT KAISERINE SOON AND YOU NEED ME.
NOT NECESSARILY, CORTO.
OH YES YOU DO, RAS! TWO WHITE OFFICERS ARE MORE CONVINCING THAN ONE. THE GERMANS WORRY ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT!
AND SOMEONE'S GOT TO HIDE OUR TWO YOUNGSTERS..
I SUPPOSE YOU DON'T TRUST CRANIO AND THE NATIVES, SO THERE'S ONLY ME LEFT. THAT ANNOYS YOU, BUT THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO ABOUT IT.
I HAVE TO ADMIT YOU'RE RIGHT. I DO NEED YOU! WHEN WE REACH KAISERINE, YOU'LL TAKE THE CATAMARAN WITH THE TWO CHILDREN ON BOARD, THEN GO AND WAIT FOR ME ON THE OTTILEN FLUSS. AS SOON AS I'VE FINISHED WITH VON SPEEKE...
I'LL COME AND FETCH YOU. THE GERMANS MUSTN'T SPOT THE KIDDIES. THEY'D TAKE THEM UNDER THEIR PROTECTION AND THEN WE CAN KISS THE RANSOM GOODBYE. WHAT'S MORE, I'M READY TO SPLIT IT WITH YOU, WITHOUT THE "MONK" KNOWING... WHAT DO YOU THINK?
THAT YOU'RE CRAZY! HE'LL FIND OUT SOONER OR LATER. WHAT DO YOU THINK CRANIO'S DOING ON BOARD? HE'S HERE TO KEEP AN EYE ON YOU!
NOBODY CAN TRUST CRANIO... NOT EVEN THE "MONK"!


AT THAT MOMENT, PANDORA WAKES UP IN THE CATAMARAN.
I MUST HAVE SLEPT FOR AGES.. BUT... WHERE'S CAIN? CAIN!
CAIN!! THEY'VE TAKEN HIM AWAY. HIS BED'S EMPTY! CAIN!
I'M OUTSIDE, PANDORA. I'M FEELING MUCH BETTER UP HERE. LISTEN!
WE HAVE COME FROM GREAT HAWAIKI, FROM DISTANT HAWAIKI...
WHAT A BEAUTIFUL SONG. IT MUST BE MAORI.
I'M SO HAPPY YOU'RE UP NOW.
THE NATIVE BOATSWAIN, THE ONE CALLED CRANIO, HELPED ME UP WHILE YOU WERE ASLEEP. THE FRESH AIR IS DOING ME GOOD.
HAVE YOU SEEN ANYONE? WHERE ARE WE GOING?
I'VE NO IDEA. AND, WHAT'S MORE, I DON'T CARE. THINGS AREN'T SO BAD HERE, AND WHEN WE SEE THE GERMANS, WE'LL ASK THEM TO TAKE US UNDER THEIR PROTECTION.
THE GERMANS? I DON'T THINK WE'LL GET EVEN A DISTANT GLIMPSE OF THEM. CAPTAIN RASPUTIN WILL CERTAINLY NOT WANT TO LOSE THE CHANCE OF GETTING HIS HANDS ON A NICE BIG RANSOM. YOU CAN FORGET ABOUT YOUR GERMANS.
WELL SPOKEN, PANDORA! MY DEAR CHAP, I RATHER THINK THE YOUNG LADY'S RIGHT.
YOU'RE LOOKING BETTER. YOU'VE BEEN LUCKY SO FAR. IF YOU USE YOUR HEAD A LITTLE BIT LESS, YOU MIGHT STAY THAT WAY.

WHEN WE'VE ARRIVED WHERE WE'RE GOING, THE THREE OF US ARE GOING TO GO FOR A LITTLE CRUISE DOWN A LITTLE RIVER AND DO A SPOT OF FISHING. WE'LL WAIT FOR GOOD OLD RASPUTIN TO COME BACK AND THEN, WE SHALL SEE WHAT WE SHALL SEE. I'LL LEAVE THE REST AS A SURPRISE.
YOU REALLY THINK YOU'RE SMART, DON'T YOU?
YOU'D BE WISER TO GO AWAY AND LEAVE US IN PEACE.
OH, REALLY? THAT'S NOT VERY NICE OF YOU! SO YOU DON'T FIND ME FUNNY?
WELL, IN THAT CASE, I'LL HAVE ONE CUSTOMER LESS. AND YOU'RE QUITE RIGHT NOT TO FIND ME FUNNY. YOUR SITUATION HERE IS NO LAUGHING MATTER.
STOP TALKING TO ME LIKE THAT. WE HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON.
THEN BE A LITTLE POLITER YOURSELF. ACCEPT ME THE WAY I AM, OR ELSE GO TO HELL!
OH, DO WHATEVER YOU WANT, JUST GO AWAY AND LEAVE ME IN PEACE. I HAVE NO DESIRE TO SPEAK TO YOU!
TELL CAP'N CORTO THAT WE'RE NEARING GERMAN TERRITORY. WHAT SHOULD WE DO? UNMOOR THE BOAT, OR SAIL ON IN THE SHIP?
IT'S NOT UP TO HIM. HE ONLY REPEATS CAP'N RASPUTIN'S ORDERS. I'LL GO AND TELL HIM.
GERMAN TERRITORY!
ARE WE THERE ALREADY? TELL CAP'N RASPUTIN.
IT WOULD BE BETTER IF YOU TOLD HIM. THAT WAY, YOU WILL FIND OUT IF WE ARE GOING TO SAIL TO THE RIVER IN THE SHIP OR IN THE BOAT.
DID YOU SEE THAT, PANDORA? CORTO'S GONE OFF IN A RAGE. HE DOESN'T LIKE RECEIVING ORDERS.
IF HE'S LOST HIS PATIENCE, THEN THAT'S A LITTLE BIT YOUR FAULT TOO. BE CAREFUL, CAIN, YOU'VE MADE AN ENEMY OF HIM.
WHAT DO I CARE? WHAT'S ONE ENEMY MORE OR LESS? IT'S GETTING COLD. HELP ME BACK INSIDE WILL YOU, PANDORA?
YES, DEAREST
RAI TAHITI ROA O VAU TE MATAI, O VAU TE MATAI, FARA RII E, POPOTI TE TAHI,

CAP'N CORTO, CAP'N RASPUTIN IS CALLING FOR YOU!
ALL RIGHT, I'M COMING!
WE'VE REACHED THE MOUTH OF THE KAISERINE. WHAT'S THE PLAN?
HOW ARE OUR YOUNG GUESTS?
OH, JUST FINE. THE BOY'S GOT GUTS. HE WON'T BE INTIM-IDATED.
REALLY? WELL, THAT'S YOUR PROBLEM!
KEEPING HIM QUIET ISN'T GOING TO BE EASY.
WELL IF HE DOESN'T STAY CALM, THEN I'LL BE ALONG TO SORT HIM OUT, IF YOU FOLLOW ME..
THE FAMILY WILL PAY THE SAME RANSOM FOR ONE OR FOR BOTH OF THEM. GETTING RID OF THE BOY WILL BE EASY ENOUGH. IS THAT CLEAR?
EXPLAIN THAT TO HIM. HE'LL CHANGE HIS TUNE THEN, YOU'LL SEE!
YOU WON'T DO ANYTHING OF THE KIND!
AS FAR AS I'M CON-CERNED, THE LAD'S FINE AS HE IS.
ALL RIGHT, IT'S UP TO YOU.
AND ANOTHER THING. THE GIRL'S IN MY CARE AS WELL. I WANT TO TAKE THEM BOTH HOME SAFE AND SOUND.
HEY, RAS! I'M TALKING TO YOU! DO YOU UNDER-STAND?
YES, BUT, I...
NO, BUTS! OR ELSE WE FINISH THINGS RIGHT HERE AND NOW!
DON'T FORGET IT. I'M GOING TO COVER MYSELF ON THIS ONE!
YES, OF COURSE. JUST AS YOU WANT!

YOU'RE AS SUSPICIOUS AS A ONE-EYED DOG!
YES, PARTIC-ULARLY WHEN I'VE GOT A THINKING SCORPION AT MY BACK!
THAT'S ENOUGH TALK. TAKE THE CATAMARAN AND GO AND WAIT FOR ME ON THE OTTILLEN FLUSS. BUT BE CAREFUL. THERE ARE SENIK NATIVES IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD. THEY'RE ROBBERS AND CANNIBALS. I'LL BE THROUGH WITH VON SPEEKE IN THREE OR FOUR DAYS' TIME.
ALL RIGHT. I'LL TAKE CRANIO ALONG WITH ME FOR PROTECTION. THAT WAY, YOU'LL BE FREE TO SAY WHATEVER YOU WANT... BUT, IN FACT, I DON'T THINK THERE'S ANY POINT ME GOING ANYWHERE ANY MORE. LOOK, HERE COMES A PATROL BOAT.
LOOK, PANDORA. A GERMAN PATROL BOAT'S COMING.
CAIN, CRANIO'S HERE. HE WON'T LET YOU OUT.
DAMN THAT VON SPEEKE. HE HASN'T EVEN LEFT US ENOUGH TIME TO DROP ANCHOR.
I'LL GO DOWN INTO THE CATAMARAN TO WATCH THE CHILDREN.
SURE ENOUGH, A PATROL BOAT FLYING A GERMAN ENSIGN DRAWS UP.

ACH! CAPTAIN RASPUTIN HAS DONE A GOOD JOB. LIKE A REAL PIRATE!
LIKE A PIRATE, SIR?
YES, MR. SLÜTTER, A PIRATE! RASPUTIN IS GOING TO PROVIDE US WITH SOME COAL AND THE BASES WE NEED FOR REFUELLING. WE WILL QUITE SIMPLY PAY HIM WITHOUT ASKING HOW HE CAME BY THEM. THERE IS PROBABLY A MASTERMIND AT WORK BEHIND HIM... SOMEONE WHO WANTS TO STAY INCOGNITO.

IT MIGHT EVEN BE THE "MONK". HE'S PROBABLY BEHIND THIS WHOLE SET-UP. EVER HEARD OF THE "MONK", MR. SLÜTTER?
NEIN, MR. GALLAND. BUT I FIND IT ODD THAT GERMANY ACCEPTS SUCH ALLIES!
BY THE TIME THE NEXT WAR IS OVER, MR. SLÜTTER, YOU WON'T FIND ANYTHING ODD AT ALL!

WELCOME, CAPTAIN RASPUTIN! WE RECEIVED YOUR MESSAGE AND EVERYTHING'S IN ORDER HERE. ADMIRAL VON SPEEKE WILL NOT BE COMING, BUT HE HAS AUTHORIZED ME TO MAKE THE FINAL AGREEMENT. WE WILL TAKE YOU ASHORE. SOME EXCELLENT RUM IS AWAITING YOU!
VERY WELL, GALLAND! I'M COMING STRAIGHT AWAY. I'LL JUST GIVE SOME ORDERS TO MY SECOND-IN-COMMAND, AND I'LL BE WITH YOU.
TO HELL WITH IT... INSTEAD OF THE ADMIRAL, THAT OLD FOX GALLAND'S TURNED UP. I'LL HAVE TO GO ASHORE, CORTO. DON'T LET THEM FIND THE CHILDREN!
GALLAND, EH? THAT'S GOING TO MAKE YOUR LIFE DIFFICULT, RASPUTIN. BUT IT WAS RATHER TO BE EXPECTED. VON SPEEKE WOULD NEVER NEGOTIATE WITH PIRATES, AT LEAST, NOT DIRECTLY. GO ON, DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.
THAT EVENING AT THE GERMAN RESIDENCE AT THE MOUTH OF THE KAISERIN AUGUSTA FLUSS
NOW THEN, RASPUTIN, WHAT WE NEED ARE BASES ON THREE GROUPS OF ISLANDS: THE ELLICE, THE FRIENDLY ISLANDS AND THE MARSHAL ISLANDS. OUR PACIFIC COLONIES WILL CERTAINLY BE OCCUPIED AND OUR FLEET WILL THUS HAVE DIFFICULTIES REACHING A NEUTRAL PORT IN SOUTH AMERICA...
I SEE... BUT HOW THEN WILL YOU MANAGE YOUR RUNNING OPERATIONS?
WE'LL MANAGE, MR. RASPUTIN. WE'LL MANAGE AND SO WILL YOU. WE'RE GOING TO LEAVE BEHIND TWO SMALL, BUT RAPID, DESTROYERS, PLUS A SUBMARINE WHICH NO-ONE KNOWS ABOUT EXCEPT CERTAIN PEOPLE IN THE ADMIRALTY. THAT IS BECAUSE YOUR WAR IS NOT GOING TO BE A LAWFUL ONE. SO YOU WON'T BE FLYING A GERMAN ENSIGN. BUT I'LL BE LEAVING YOU TWO OFFICERS AND SOME SEAMEN TO ACT AS INSTRUCTORS.
YOUR SERVICES WILL BE PAID FOR IN GOLD WHICH WILL BE DEPOSITED IN THE BANK OF YOUR CHOICE IN A NEUTRAL COUNTRY. I THINK THAT'S ALL FOR NOW. EXCEPT FOR..
...THE GOLD YOU'RE GOING TO RECEIVE TONIGHT IN RETURN FOR THE DUTCH SHIP AND ITS CARGO OF COAL. MR. SLÜTTER IS ONE OF THE OFFICERS WHO WILL BE STAYING ON AS INSTRUCTORS.
ME? REALLY, AM I...?
LIEUTENANT SLÜTTER DOESN'T LOOK VERY HAPPY, DOES HE, GALLAND?
MR. SLÜTTER NEVER LOOKS HAPPY.
BUT I CAN ASSURE YOU, MR. RASPUTIN, THAT MR. SLÜTTER IS ABSOLUTELY THRILLED. ACH! NOW THEN...
...LET'S DRINK TOGETHER. TOMORROW, WE'LL CONTINUE WITH THIS FILTHY BUSINESS.
ALL RIGHT, GALLAND. YOU'RE ALWAYS FULL OF BRIGHT IDEAS.

THE CATAMARAN, WITH THE TWO YOUNGSTERS ON BOARD UNDER CORTO MALTESE'S GUARD, IS MOORED JUST BY THE GERMAN RESIDENCE.
THE DIN THE GERMANS ARE MAKING CAN BE HEARD FROM HERE. THEY'RE GIVING RASPUTIN A PARTY.
THAT MEANS WE'RE NOT FAR AWAY FROM THEIR RESIDENCE.
THAT'S RIGHT. ABOUT FIFTY YARDS' BREAST-STROKE.
WHAT DO YOU THINK PANDORA? SHALL I GIVE IT A TRY?
I DON'T THINK YOU'LL MAKE IT. THERE ARE BOUND TO BE GUARDS.
BUT I'VE GOT TO MAKE THE ATTEMPT! IF ONLY I COULD TALK TO A GERMAN SOLDIER!
NO, CAIN! IT'S TOO DANGEROUS. THEY'RE QUITE CAPABLE OF SHOOTING YOU!
BUT IF I DON'T TRY NOW, WE'LL NEVER BE ABLE TO ESCAPE. IT'S OUR ONLY CHANCE. NOBODY'S AROUND.
I HAVE TO DO IT, PANDORA!
SUPPOSING YOU MAKE IT TO THE GERMANS, DO YOU REALLY IMAGINE THAT THEY'LL..
... HELP YOU? DO YOU THINK THEY'D GO AGAINST RASPUTIN AND CORTO MALTESE JUST WHEN THEY NEED THEM MOST? NO, CAIN, I DON'T THINK THEY'D TAKE US UNDER THEIR PROTECTION!
YOU'RE TALKING LIKE A FRIGHTENED WOMAN, PANDORA. I HARDLY RECOGNIZE YOU!
YES, PANDORA, PANDORA, AND PANDORA! I'M NOT MADE OF STEEL!
LISTEN TO ME! I'M GOING TO TRY! WE HAVE TO TRY!
NO! NO!

DON'T BE FRIGHTENED!
BE CAREFUL, CAIN.
MY GOD, HE'S GONE! IF ONE OF THOSE PIRATES SPOTS HIM, HE'LL BE DONE FOR. BUT HE'S RIGHT, IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO LET THE GERMANS KNOW WE'RE HERE .
THERE'S SOMEONE OUTSIDE. I CAN HEAR HIM BREATHING. MAYBE IT'S CAIN TRYING TO PLUCK UP COURAGE.
WHAT'S HE WAITING FOR? WHY DOESN'T HE COME BACK INSIDE?
HOW ARE THINGS, PANDORA?
I WAS GETTING BORED OUTSIDE. I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT LIKE A LITTLE CHAT.
WE HAVE NOTHING TO SAY TO EACH OTHER!
HOW STUPID I AM! THIS COULD BE A WAY TO HELP CAIN...
I'M NOT USED TO RECEIVING SAILORS AT NIGHT.
REALLY? THEN I'M HARDLY THE RIGHT COMPANY FOR YOU. GOOD NIGHT!
WAIT A MOMENT... I DIDN'T MEAN TO ANNOY YOU... IN FACT, I'M FEELING A BIT LONELY..
WHAT?
I SAID THAT YOU COULD STAY!
DON'T BE SURPRISED, CAPTAIN. I'VE GIVEN UP ON THE IDEA OF BEING RELEASED IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. I NEED A FRIEND! AND YOU SEEM NICE ENOUGH!

I NEED TO FEEL THAT I'M BEING LOOKED AFTER. CAIN'S TOO YOUNG. HE'S STILL A CHILD. WHILE YOU, CAPTAIN, YOU'RE A STRONG MAN... I'D LIKE YOU TO... FOR ME TO..
WHAT'S ALL THIS ABOUT? ARE YOU MAKING FUN OF ME?
NO, I ONLY...
WHAT HAVE I SAID? DON'T LEAVE ME LIKE THAT. WHY WON'T YOU STAY?
AND WHO SAID I WAS GOING? OF COURSE I'LL STAY.
I WASN'T EXPECTING THIS, THAT'S ALL... DO YOU KNOW WHAT WE'RE GOING TO DO?
WE'LL GO OFF TO MANILA AND GET MARRIED. JUST YOU AND ME TOGETHER, WE'LL FORGET ABOUT THE REST!
MY GOD! WHATEVER HAVE I DONE? LEAVE ME ALONE!
PANDORA, LET'S GET MARRIED!
LEAVE ME ALONE, YOU IDIOT!
HO HO HO! THE JOKE'S OVER! YOU REALLY MUST THINK I'M STUPID IF YOU THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO BE TAKEN IN BY SUCH CHILDISH PLAYACTING.
WHATEVER DO YOU MEAN? I DON'T UNDERSTAND?!

OH, YOU'LL UNDERSTAND EVERYTHING IN A MINUTE OR TWO. TANERO!
CAIN!!
DON'T PANIC, LITTLE SISTER. YOUR FRIEND HASN'T BEEN HURT BADLY. HE'S LUCKY I'M HERE AND NOT RASPUTIN.
ALL I'VE DONE IS CLOSE ONE OF HIS EYES FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS. IT WAS BRAVE OF YOU TO TRY TO MAKE ME WASTE MY TIME BY PRETENDING YOU WERE LONELY AND HOLD ME UP WHILE CAIN MADE HIS GETAWAY... YOU JUST FORGOT THAT I'M AN OLD HAND, AND A LITTLE DADDY'S GIRL LIKE YOU ISN'T GOING TO...
ANYWAY, I'LL SAY IT AGAIN, YOU WERE LUCKY TO HAVE ME ABOARD. LET'S GO NOW, CRANIO. HOIST THE SAIL...
ONE OF THESE DAYS I'M GOING TO KILL YOU, CORTO MALTESE!
OETE NIE! OETE NIE UATERE!
WE'RE GOING TO HAVE TO STEER EAST, CRANIO. PUT THE NEW MAORIS ON FIRST WATCH, BUT GIVE THE HELM TO THE FIJIANS.
OKAY, CORTO!
DAMN HIM! HE GOT ME AT THE LAST MOMENT!
CALM DOWN NOW, CAIN! I'LL GET HIM WHEN THE TIME'S RIPE.
YES, BUT HOW MUCH LONGER WILL WE HAVE TO WAIT? WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE WE ARE.
THIS IS A LONG COASTLINE. AND BEYOND THE PALM TREES, I SAW SOME MOUNTAINS. IF IT ISN'T THE CONTINENT, THEN IT MUST BE A LARGE ISLAND. GIVEN THE GERMAN PRESENCE, IT MIGHT BE NEW POMERANIA, OR NEW GUINEA...
HUSH! LISTEN, WE'RE ON THE MOVE!
I'VE CAUGHT MY FISH. IT'S ON ITS WAY UP TO THE LIGHT. MY FISH IS HERE AT LAST, IT'S TAHITI.

THE WEATHER'S WORSENING, CORTO. THERE'LL BE A STORM SOON. WE OUGHT TO HUG THE COASTLINE, BUT THESE PARTS ARE FULL OF TE MIFA, THE BURNING CORAL. WE SHOULD HEAVE TO AS SOON AS WE SPOT A BAY.
WHAT'S THAT CANOE THAT'S HEADING TOWARDS US? THE RAINBOW IS BENT OVER IT AND THE SEA SWALLOWS FLUTTER AROUND IT. IT'S HERAGI LAND.
WHERE IS HERAGI LAND, CRANIO?
HERAGI LAND IS A FAR-OFF MAORI ISLAND, CORTO. THE SOUTH-EASTERN MAORIS NOW CALL IT PETANIA!
PETANIA MEANS BRITANNIA. SO WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT MUST BE PITCAIRN, THE MUTINEERS' ISLAND!
THE OLD WORLD WHICH OUR POLYNESIAN ANCESTORS CREATED IS NOW DEAD. THE TEMPLES HAVE BEEN DESTROYED, THEIR DRUMS STOPPED BEATING LONG AGO. TANE, TU, RONGO, TANGAROA AND THE EARTH MOTHER AND SKY FATHER'S OTHER SONS HAVE ABANDONED US. THE GREAT CANOES THAT USED TO CROSS OCEANS HAVE TURNED INTO DUST.
ON HERAGI THESE DAYS THERE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE MUTINEERS AND OTAHITI WOMEN. THAT'S WHY IT'S CALLED PETANIA.
THE OLD NETS HAVE BEEN LEFT TO ONE SIDE. WE GO FISHING WITH NEW NETS, BUT WITH WHICH NEW NET SHALL WE FISH? THE WEATHER'S WORSENING, CORTO!
DAMN YOU, CRANIO, DO YOU THINK I'M BLIND?
CORTO... . CORTO... THE LONG WAVE!!!
WHAT? WHERE?
JESUS CHRIST, I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT...
THE WAVE'S GOING TO CARRY US AWAY. THE GREAT CANOE'S DAYS ARE OVER. EUA UETOPA.

To be continued

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